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HOPES and EXPECTATIONS,

GROUNDED ON THE

PRESENT SITUATION

OF THE

EMIGRANT MEMBERS

OF THE

Roman Catholic Church,

NOW RESIDENT IN

ENGLAND.

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HOPES and EXPECTATIONS,

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THE present situation of many of the members of the Romish Church among us, its Ecclesiastics especially, furnishes an hope, that what neither argument, however resistless, nor reason, however triumphant, have been able to effect, kindness may gradually bring to pass.

We cannot but indulge an expectation, that the charity which fits the hearts of those who cherish it for Heaven, may prepare the hearts of others for that heavenly disposition, fraternal love. We cannot but entertain an eager wish, that religious amity, if entire agreement in opinion be not attainable, may take place where hostility has frequently been carried to fatal and deplorable extremities.

I am not ignorant that some good and zealous men in the last age, strained every point of compliance and accommodation, till they touched the very verge of those errors which they really detested, in order to procure re-union in the Western Church. Nor is it with any pleasure that I suggest to such as are our beneficiaries in the present day, in what manner these efforts were received. They who were courted by such advances, spurned at the favour, and turned it as an argument, to prove the inconsistency of Protestants who were divided in their notions about that which they concurred only in condemning. The points alluded to, were those concerning Idolatry in Image and Host worship.

Many excellent men, by their concessions, exceeded the just lines of that primitive scale of truth, which was applied to the reform of faith and practice

in the Church. The enlargement of their zeal for concord, drew scorn from the adversary, and put scandal in the way of others.

I am well aware that some of the Romish party have endeavoured without the same desire of approximation, to make it appear, that when the Solifidian doctrines, which in the strict sense, never were espoused by our Church, were generally relinquished, that we relapsed immediately into their tenets concerning justification. But that assertion, however confidently advanced and often urged with triumph, was precipitate and groundless. The difference between us remained, and remains still. We still hold no righteousness but that of Christ alone, to be sufficient to justify any of the race of Adam. We hold still, that Christ paid the sole price of eternal life and happiness; that we are adopted freely, to the glory of which

he is the only rightful heir; and that we have access to that state of adoption, and receive its privileges by faith, though the terms and stipulations of the new covenant, impose the necessary conditions of a right belief, a true repentance, and an uniform obedience. We reject still that position, that Christ merited, in order that we might merit. We do not think, that the ascribing good works to the prime gift and sources of divine grace, whilst they are held to be available through their own worth to salvation, though it may seem to soften the opinion of merit, amounts to the sound doctrine of the efficacy of Christ's merits, prevailing for those who are united to him, forming the only valuable cause of our redemption, and constituting the true reason of acceptance before God. We maintain still, both with regard to the unregenerate and regenerate state of man, that to profess to be with-

without sin, is to deceive ourselves. We believe still, that the promised recompence, though the measure of it will be proportioned to the work of each man, is truly and properly a gift, procured for us by Christ alone.

I am not desirous of enlarging upon many other points, in which we rest still at a distance: the invocation of the Blessed Virgin and of departed Saints, which we judge to be derogatory from the one prevailing and sufficient intercession of Christ, our advocate; the denial of the cup to the main body of believers; the conceit of infallibility, about which, we find no agreement in those who urge it, which we refer to the divine Word, but which they restrain to one universal Bishop, or to an oecumenical Council, or to both together, according to their diverse notions.

I am still less disposed to revive the memory of some grosser errors and ima-

ginations, which appear already to be half forgotten : Purgatory ; the bank of super-erogated works, constituting the fund of indulgencies, with others of like sort.

It is even with reluctance, that at this time I enumerate these points, since I disclaim all intention of hostility, and am really penetrated with a different sentiment. The bare mention of such things, may seem to imply all that can be urged against them. Gross errors appear to be refuted when they are only named ; and I name them now, merely with the hope that the revisal of them may at length be undertaken, not by us only, but by those who have too long contended for them.

Were I more fond of sharp words than I believe myself to be, I would not use them toward those who are receiving favours at our hands, and in whom the spirit to repel attacks must be repressed
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by the more humane and gentle spirit of gratitude. But I cannot refrain from expressing one wish, which in no construction may be deemed angry or reproachful: nor can I pass this opportunity of declaring one hope which I sincerely entertain, concerning the members of that desolated Church, whose ruins we deplore, and whose scattered flock we would fain cherish and defend. My hope is, that they whom we thus regard, may enter into a serious and severe consideration, whether the most eager adversaries of our Church, who in past times have stood forth against us, have ever been able to fix the charge of Heresy upon us, with any show of colour. Whether they could ever make good and prove against us one point of deviation from the fundamental truths of Christianity.—Whether they could ever show one wrong definition in our mode of commenting

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the Catholic Creed.—They who are conversant in the controversies which have been held between us, will know well that they cannot support by any solid proof, that bitter and uncharitable censure. They will know well, that they have been challenged to it frequently, and have met the challenge only by repeating their assertions. Let then the present intercourse of kindness at least prevail with them, either at this moment of their residence among us, or when God shall bestow a peaceful settlement upon them, for which hour we pray with full sincerity, to make one advance to real harmony and good-will; and whatever be the fate of other matters in dispute between us, to renounce that unjust and groundless allegation. They well know how odious the brand of Heresy is, and that nothing but its odium could have prompted angry men for so long a season, so obstinately to

affix it to a Church, in whose belief no one departure from the fundamental truths of Christianity can be discovered.

Let them, I pray, consider, that although we detest their errors, we have not retaliated their injurious sentence. Of which candour, a disingenuous use has frequently been made in that mean and despicable argument, which puts the truth on all sides out of the question, and only urges, that it is safer to be where it is allowed on both parts, that salvation *may* be had, than where, on one part, the possibility of being saved is utterly denied.

Many of those, concerning whom I now express my hopes, will, I am persuaded, grieve to be reminded that their Church has never by any public document departed from this harsh and unwarrantable accusation, although their private Writers have been quite unable to support the charge.

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May we not also be permitted to indulge the hope, that the fair pattern of our practice and worship in the Church of England, may operate further, to induce others to trace once more the grounds upon which that Church reformed itself.

There was a moment, a long age rather, previous to the *Æra* of the Reformation, when the whole Western Church spake loudly, and even groaned in supplication for relief, from the vast burden of superstitions and abuses. Let it be considered, how that ardent prayer was stifled. The intrigues which marked that unhappy day of abortive hopes, when what had been offered for redress was more eagerly confirmed by the Papal decrees of Trent, cannot now exist so strongly. Let us hope, therefore, that the candid and dispassionate may recur to that wish which was entertained by many, who, nevertheless, when they

they were thwarted in their views, and baffled in their struggles, continued with heavy hearts and fluctuating thoughts in their accustomed communion : fearful of separation, though for the unity of truth, to which a seeming unity, en-folding many errors, was preferred.

Let us hope, that some will take up in an hour more favourable to reformation and right judgement, the hour of adversity, the generous design which was once, to the grief of many good men on all sides, overlaid.

Let us hope, that the pastor and the guide, will at least instruct their more ignorant and humble followers to receive those as brethren, who have never loaded them with the black reproach of Heresy ; a censure, which must tend most powerfully to preclude the introduction, and to suppress the growth of good-will, and of all fraternal sentiments. It cannot be dissembled, that however worldly

courtesy or worldly interests may induce the members of the Romish Church to admit the expressions of brotherly esteem, and to profess the disposition to it; yet those whom they continue to regard as Heretics, they must at best regard with terror.

I am the more inclined to urge this point, by considering the domestic misery which has arisen in many instances from this circumstance. It frequently happens, that persons of different communions unite in marriage. In such cases, where a perseverance in separate persuasions continues, the prospect of domestic happiness and entire affection may not perhaps be very fair: but without doubt, where one party is taught to view the other as debased with heresy, the prospect must be comfortless indeed! It is impossible where the horror of such suspicion rests, that connubial love should not be embittered. I address myself therefore more especially to those

of our own country; who adhere to the Romish persuasion, and are most likely to be entangled in this snare. I entreat them to urge the persecuted foreigners whom they now harbour with peculiar tenderness, to examine whether the prejudice in which they have so long persisted, be not groundless and unjust. It was originally of foreign growth. Before the Papal Bull of Pope Pius V., which drove all things to extremities, the members of the Romish Church entertained no such hard thoughts. They frequented our Churches, and partook our Sacraments. The great aversion which has since subsisted, has from that time been fomented in foreign countries; where, unfortunately, the opportunity for cherishing it has been constant, because the ties of religion have induced so many of our countrymen to send their children for foreign education.

I am informed, and I regard it as a new ground for my hope, that many of those

those who were themselves impressed with a deep aversion to our Church, and who had such opportunities for instilling it into their pupils, have experienced an happy change in the rigour of their sentiments, from ocular observations.

Let it not therefore be misconstrued, or be deemed insidious, if the Writer of these few short remarks, who entertains an earnest zeal for the interests of those poor fugitives now suing for protection at our hands, should thus avow his hope and expectation, that the great step towards religious harmony and friendship may now be made, by revoking an ill-grounded, unsupported charge, the offence of which must for ever be fatal to all sound and sincere esteem, to all solid peace, to all forbearance in matters of religion, to all true affection in social or conjugal connections, to all concord, to all charity.

THE END.

